of India increased the scale of allocation to BPL and APL families to 35 kg of foodgrains per family per month with effect from 1st April, 2002. The Scale of Issue of foodgrains and their Central Issue Prices are as follows:

Scale of Issue (kg. per family per month)

Effective from	APL	BPL	AAY
June, 1997	-	10	-
April, 2000	-	20	-
July, 2001	-	25	25 (from Dec., 2000)
April, 2002	35	35	35

Central Issue Prices (CIPs)

(*Rs. per Kg.*)

APL		BPL		AAY	
Wheat	Rice (Gr.A)	Wheat	Rice (Common/Gr.A)	Wheat	Rice (Comm/Gr.A)
6.10	8.30	4.15	5.65	2.00	3.00

(e) Does not arise.

Procurement of Wheat

†839. SHRI MOTILAL VORA:
SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the total wheat production in country in the year 2007-08;

(b) the minimum support price of wheat fixed by Government in the year 2008;

(c) the wheat procurement target fixed by Government for the year 2008;

(d) whether the shortfall in wheat procurement target is due to agents because of whom entire payment is not made to farmers on time;

(e) the steps being taken by Government to achieve the target fixed by Government;

(f) the quantity of wheat imported in the year 2007-08; and

(g) the wheat production target fixed for year 2008-09 in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) As per the 2nd Advance Estimates release on 7th February, 2008, production of wheat in country in the year 2007-08 is estimated at 74.81 million tonnes.

(b) The Minimum Support Price (MSP) of wheat for 2008 is Rs. 1000 per quintal, as fixed by the Government.

(c) Since procurement by Government Agencies is open-ended, no procurement target has been fixed for the marketing season 2008-09.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) Following steps are being taken by the Government to maximize wheat procurement in the Rabi Marketing Season (RMS) 2008-09:

(i) To encourage farmers to grow more wheat, the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for wheat has been fixed at Rs. 1000 per quintal for RMS 2008-09 which is Rs. 250 per quintal more than that for RMS 2007-08.

(ii) Export of wheat on private account has been banned till further orders. Wheat exports from Central Pool are also banned.

(iii) Import of wheat on private account a zero duty has been permitted till further orders.

(iv) Import of 23 lakh tonnes of wheat was done during 2007-08 which improve the stock position in the Central Pool.

A notification requiring furnishing of return to Secretary, Department of Food of the State Government in case of purchase (by any Company or Firm or individual) of wheat beyond 10,000 tonnes and to the Central Government in case of purchase of wheat beyond 25,000 tonnes has been issued. The above returns will indicate from where maximum quantities have been purchased.

(f) 23 lakh tonnes of wheat was imported during 2007-08.

(g) Wheat production targets for the agriculture year 2008-09 are fixed before the start of the agriculture year.

Improvement of PDS in rural areas

840. SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to revamp and improve the Public Distribution System in the country particularly in the rural areas;

(b) if so, the details of steps taken to improve the Public Distribution System in the country during the year 2007-08; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (c) Reforming of the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) to improve its efficiency, accountability and effectiveness is an ongoing process. The Government has been taking up a series of measures to improve the TPDS in rural as well as urban areas.

The TPDS is operated under joint responsibility of Central and State and UT Governments. The Central Government is responsible for procurement, storage and allocation of foodgrains upto the Principle Distribution Centres (PDC) in the States/UTs State and UT Governments are responsible for identification of BPL, families, issuance of ration cards to eligible families, lifting of foodgrains and distribution through the network of 4.94 lakh Fair Price Shops scattered all over the country.